

REMARKS

Claims 1-28, 30, 32-35, 37, 39-42, 44, 46, and 47 are currently pending. In the Office Action, the Examiner rejects Claims 1, 2, 5-8, 11-14, 16-20, 22-28, 32-35, 40-42, and 47 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,134,534 to Walker et al. in view of U.S. Patent Appl. Publ. No. 2002/0100802 to Sehr. The Examiner rejects Claims 3, 4, 9, 10, 15, 16, 21, 30, 37, 39, 44, and 46 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Walker and Sehr and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 7,281,168 to Coates et al.

Applicants respectfully disagree with the rejection of independent Claims 1, 7, 13, and 19 and submit arguments traversing the cited references, which do not raise new issues. As explained in further detail below, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are patentable over the cited references and request reconsideration and allowance of the present application.

Independent Claims 1, 7, 13, and 19

Independent Claim 1 recites a method for sharing customer information among a plurality of electronic storage facilities. The method includes providing a mass data store including, in a first data record, identifying information for a customer having an associated first customer identifier. The method further includes receiving identifying information on the customer from an electronic storage facility containing information about the customer including a second customer identifier that is different from the first customer identifier and storing the received identifying information in a second data record. Furthermore, the method includes comparing the identifying information in the first and second data records to determine if an identifier is assigned to the customer and assigning an identifier for the customer based on a result of the determination that an identifier is not assigned to the customer. Finally, the method of Claim 1 recites cross-referencing the assigned identifier with the identifying information stored in the first and second data records and providing identifying information using the assigned identifier to an electronic storage facility. Independent Claims 7, 13, and 19 include similar recitations in the context of a computer and systems.

In Applicants' previous response, independent Claims 1, 7, 13, and 19 were amended to recite comparing the identifying information in the first and second data records to determine if an identifier is assigned to the customer and assigning an identifier for the customer based on a result of the determination that an identifier is not assigned to the customer. The Examiner finds that Walker discloses assigning an identifier for the customer based on a result of the determination that an identifier is not assigned to the customer, wherein Walker discloses that a test procedure is performed to determine if an airline provided a counteroffer to the CPO. However, the Examiner acknowledges that Walker does not teach or suggest comparing the identifying information in the first and the second data records to determine if an identifier is assigned to the customer. Instead, the Examiner relies on Sehr for Walker's shortcomings.

Neither Walker nor Sehr teaches or suggests that the first and second data records are compared to determine if an identifier has been assigned for the customer and then assigning an identifier based on the determination that an identifier has not been assigned, as recited by Claims 1, 7, 13, and 19. In contrast, the Examiner relies on portions of Sehr that relate to comparing a passenger's "life" biometrics information (e.g., a fingerprint or voice imprints) with biometrics information stored in the passenger card or a remote database to verify that the passenger is the legitimate card holder. Although a comparison may be made when comparing the biometrics information, the comparison is not made to determine if an identifier is assigned to the customer. Rather, the biometrics information is simply used to determine whether the passenger is authorized to access the information on the card. Also, the "life" biometrics information is not stored in a "data record" as required by Claims 1, 7, 13, and 19, as the passenger provides the "life" biometrics information upon presentation of the passenger card for access. Only the previously supplied biometrics information is stored in the database for subsequent comparison to the "life" biometrics.

Furthermore, Walker does not teach or suggest assigning an identifier based on the determination that an identifier has not been assigned, as recited by Claims 1, 7, 13, and 19. Conversely, Walker only discloses that different identifiers, such as a customer ID or CPO ID, are assigned based on a particular database (i.e., customer ID for the customer database), but the ID's are not assigned based on any comparison between different data records associated with a

customer. Moreover, the particular recitations of Walker relied on by the Examiner (i.e., FIGS. 16a-c; col. 13, lines 8-25; and col. 21, lines 7-52) are unrelated to assigning an identifier based on the determination that an identifier has not been assigned. Rather, these particular portions relate to pricing and the allocation of inventory, testing to determine if an airline provided a counteroffer to the CPO, and creating or updating a record in the CPO database based on the counteroffer.

Moreover, the Examiner appears to dismiss the dependency of the recitations of independent Claims 1, 7, 13, and 19 on one another. In this regard, Applicants note that assigning an identifier is dependent on comparing the identifying information in the first and second data records. In fact, Claims 1, 7, 13, and 19 recite that assigning an identifier is based on the determination that an identifier has not been assigned. In particular, the comparison of biometrics information to determine whether access is authorized as disclosed by Sehr is entirely unrelated to the testing procedure of Walker that is employed to determine whether a counteroffer has been received. Thus, the Examiner appears to ignore this dependency and, instead, appears to entirely rely on hindsight by picking and choosing elements from Walker and Sehr to arrive at the claimed invention despite no teaching or suggestion to do so. In addition, Claims 1, 7, 13, and 19 recite cross-referencing the assigned identifier with the identifying information stored in the first and second data records. However, in rejecting this particular recitation, the Examiner relies on an entirely different aspect of Walker that relates to customer identification (i.e., name and identification number) stored in the CPO database, which may be used to cross-reference information stored in the customer database (i.e., col. 15, lines 12-17). Applicants fail to see the correlation between the test procedure for determining if a counteroffer has been made and cross-referencing customer identification between the CPO database and the customer database. As such, the Examiner also overlooks the dependency of assigning an identifier for the customer and then cross-referencing the assigned identifier with the identifying information.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that neither Walker nor Sehr, taken alone or in combination, teaches or suggests independent Claims 1, 7, 13, and 19. Because the dependent claims depend from and include each of the recitations of a respective independent claim,

dependent Claims 2-6, 8-12, 14-18, 20-22, 34, 35, 37, 39-42, 44, 46, and 47 are allowable for at least the same reasons as described above in conjunction with a respective independent claim.

Independent Claims 23 and 25

In Applicants' previous response, Applicants argued that the cited references did not teach or suggest a master data store including for each customer a unique identifier identifying the customer and a list of the electronic facilities that contain information for the customer along with the identification for the customer used by each electronic storage facility, as recited by independent Claims 23 and 25. In the Office Action, the Examiner finds that independent Claims 23 and 25 are essentially the same to independent Claim 19 and are rejected for the same reasons, but Claim 19 does not include the aforementioned recitation. Furthermore, in the Response to Arguments, the Examiner appears to believe that a combination of Walker, Sehr, and Coates discloses the aforementioned recitation of Claims 23 and 25 despite only relying on Walker and Sehr in the Claim Rejections. Thus, the aforementioned recitation of Claims 23 and 25 is not even addressed in the Claim Rejections. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request clarification of the rejection of independent Claims 23 and 25.

Despite the aforementioned discrepancies, Applicants do not believe that any of the cited references, or any combination of the cited references, teaches or suggests a master data store including for each customer a unique identifier identifying the customer and a list of the electronic facilities that contain information for the customer along with the identification for the customer used by each electronic storage facility, as recited by Claims 23 and 25. In this regard, at most Walker discloses that a specific identifier is created for a particular database or customer. Sehr only discloses that various information may be stored in distributed databases, such as unique identification numbers for the passengers and information relating to travel services and transportation, such as codes or identification numbers used to authorize and trigger card-based applications and to identify a particular carrier. Moreover, Coates discloses storing customer ID's, folder ID's, and metadata in a table, but does not teach or suggest that a unique identifier for a customer is stored that contains a list of electronic storage facilities for the customer in addition to identification for the customer used by each electronic storage facility, as recited by

Claims 23 and 25. Thus, none of the cited reference teaches or suggests a unique identifier that identifies the customer and a list of electronic storage facilities containing customer information and associated identifying information.

For each of the foregoing reasons, none of the cited references, taken either individually or in combination, teaches or suggests independent Claims 23 and 25. Because the dependent claims depend from and include each of the recitations of a respective independent claim, dependent Claims 24, 26-28, 30, 32, and 33 are allowable for at least the same reasons as described above in conjunction with a respective independent claim.

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Amdt. dated September 17, 2008
Reply to Office Action of August 5, 2008

CONCLUSION

In view of the amendments and remarks presented above, which do not raise new issues, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims of the present application are in condition for immediate allowance. We therefore respectfully request that a Notice of Allowance be issued. The Examiner is encouraged to contact the Applicant' undersigned attorney to resolve any remaining issues in order to expedite examination of the present application.

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required therefore (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

Respectfully submitted,



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